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ABSTRACT

This program examines the pros and cons of military secrecy in the absence of significant enemies. The United States is still buying weapons and conducting military operations under a veil of secrecy established during the Cold War. Many would argue such secrecy is unnecessary in light of recent world developments. The study guide offers questions to use before viewing the video, questions to follow the video, classroom activities to focus student thinking on the problem, topics for further research and a list of six resources. (EH)

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AMERICA'S DEFENSE MONITOR

Educational TV for the Classroom

ED 390 768

STUDY GUIDE FOR

LIFTING THE VEIL OF MILITARY SECRECY

#1123

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LIFTING THE VEIL OF MILITARY SECRECY

America is still buying weapons and conducting military operations under a veil of secrecy established during the Cold War. This chilling episode examines the pros and cons of military secrecy in the absence of significant enemies. This 30-minute video can be used in the classroom for units on American government or issues of defense.

This episode of *America's Defense Monitor* features:

Steven Aftergood
Editor, Federation of American Scientists' Secrecy and Government Bulletin

Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI)
Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations

Theodore Postol
Masachusetts Institute of Technology

Adm. Stansfield Turner (USN, Ret.)
Director, Central Intelligence Agency, 1978-1981

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR BEFORE VIEWING

1) When do you think secrecy in government is necessary?

2) What kind of situations or policies might require the government to keep information secret?

3) What possible impacts can you think of which government secrecy might have?

AFTER VIEWING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Note: It may be useful to give these questions to students prior to viewing so that they will be more prepared to respond.)

1) What images stand out in your mind from the film?

2) Does the film itself present a certain viewpoint on the issues discussed? If so, how would you describe this perspective?

3) What are the motives for military secrecy? From whom do you think governmental agencies want to keep information secret? Why?

4) What is the impact of keeping information secret? The impact on the "classified" projects themselves? On the way the U.S. government functions?

5) Do you think the end of the Cold War should have on policies of military secrecy? Why or why not?

6) The Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency together keep 5 1/2 million pieces of information secret. Meanwhile, the Department of Energy is starting to declassify past secret information. Why do you think these separate agencies are acting differently?

7) Evaluate the following statement:
"Well, what we were trying to do is get at what is really the biggest enemy of a democratic society - it's secrecy - the need for us as a government to operate in the open."
- Rep. John Conyers
Do you agree that secrecy is as an "enemy of a democratic society"? Why or why not?

8) How does this issue effect the average citizen?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Brainstorm: the pros and cons of military secrecy
Ask students to brainstorm the pros and cons of military secrecy. Encourage them to come up with numerous reasons and affects, drawing from both the film and their own ideas.
Compile these lists in front of the class. Then discuss these responses. For what reasons did students answer as they did? What is their evaluation of the impact of

military secrecy based on these ideas? What affect should this impact have on governmental policies?

Conduct a poll

At the end of the film, people are asked if they think it's okay for the military to keep programs secret. Conduct your own poll. Have students interview five individuals outside of class. They should ask these two following two questions:

* Do you think it is okay for the military to keep programs secret?
* Do you think the public has a right to know about these programs?

Students should ask those polled to respond no, yes, or undecided to each question, and then ask them to clarify their response with a short explanation.

Then compile the results in class so that the results show the number of people who responded yes, no, or undecided to each question. Discuss why people responded as they did. What impact did the way the questions were phrased have? What reasons did individuals give for their answers? Discuss what impact these responses should have on governmental policy.

POSSIBLE ESSAY TOPICS

Discuss the following statement: "*Excessive secrecy undercuts the democratic process. Not only is individual participation in decision making restricted or eliminated, but congressional participation in the decision-making process is severely undercut.*" - Steven Aftergood
What is the impact of secrecy on the "democratic process"? Do you agree with Aftergood's interpretation?

Investigate the recent disclosure of the secret nuclear weapons testing and experiments on humans during the 50s, 60s, and 70s. What impacts did these experiments have? Why were they not made public earlier? What impact did the element of secrecy have on this issue?

"*There was excessive secrecy in the Cold War... There is probably lesser need for secrecy today because we have fewer enemies in the world. But the criteria should be limited to 'will the national interest be hurt if this is released?*" - Admiral Stansfield Turner
Evaluate this statement. What impact should the end of the Cold War have on military secrecy? What criteria do you think information should meet to have to be classified?

"*We've got to expose the impact of the Cold War, both in terms of its environmental, health, and safety impacts, and also impacts on, if you will the psyche of the nation*" - Hazel O'Leary, the Secretary of Energy
Evaluate this statement. How significant do you think the exposure of this information is? What does this imply for other governmental agencies?

RESOURCES

Federation of American Scientists. Secrecy and Government Bulletin. (Monthly publication of the Federation of American Scientists, 307 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002, (202) 657-1012)

The Groom Lake Desert Rat. (A newsletter with events that occur at and around the U.S. military's secret installation area 51, Groom Lake, Nevada; contact: Glenn Campbell; Secrecy Oversight Council; HCR 61, Box 38; Rachel, NV 89001)

Schneider, Keith. "U.S. Spread Radioactive Fallout in Secret Cold War Weapon Tests." The New York Times. December 16, 1993, A1, B12.

"The Secret Military Budget." *America's Defense Monitor.* Episode #450. (30-minute video)

Sweetman, Bill. "Hypersonic Aurora: a secret dawning?" Janes Defence Weekly December 12, 1992, pp.14-16.

Turner, Stansfield. Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition. Houghton Mifflin, 1985. 304 pp.

ORGANIZATIONS:

The National Security Archive
1755 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036
(202)797-0882

Information Security Oversight Office
750 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC
(202) 634-6150

AMERICA'S DEFENSE MONITOR: THE PERFECT WAY TO BRING ISSUES TO LIFE IN THE CLASSROOM

America's Defense Monitor offers an in-depth look at our nation's military and security-related policies. Each thirty minute program is a visually stimulating and entertaining resource for the high school or college classroom. Episodes can be used to supplement regular classroom material or to introduce new topics. By bringing topics to life through the medium of video, this award-winning series can help arouse student interest in crucial issues.

Topics covered by *America's Defense Monitor* range from the social costs of military spending to nuclear proliferation, the arms trade, and the impact of the military on society, the media and the environment. Each program features interviews with important policy makers.

America's Defense Monitor is produced by the Center for Defense Information, the foremost research organization in the country analyzing military issues. The program is broadcast nationwide on the Public Broadcasting Network. For more information and a complete catalogue, contact us at:

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